

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

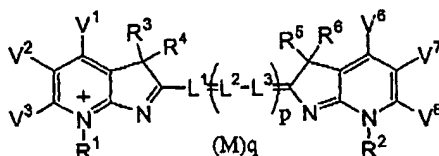
This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1-15. (canceled).

16. (currently amended): ~~The compound according to claim 4~~ A compound represented by the following general formula (IV):

General Formula (IV)



wherein V¹, V², V³, V⁶, V⁷ and V⁸ represent a hydrogen atom or a group selected from the group consisting of a halogen atom, an alkyl group, an alkenyl group, an alkynyl group, an aryl group, a heterocyclic group, cyano group, hydroxy group, nitro group, carboxyl group, an alkoxy group, an aryloxy group, a silyloxy group, a heterocyclyloxy group, an acyloxy group, a carbamoyloxy group, an alkoxycarbonyloxy group, an aryloxycarbonyloxy group, an amino group (including an anilino group), an acylamino group, an aminocarbonylamino group, an alkoxycarbonylamino group, an aryloxycarbonylamino group, a sulfamoylamino group, an alkylsulfonylamino group,

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an arylsulfonylamino group, a mercapto group, an alkylthio group, an arylthio group, a heterocyclylthio group, a suifamoyl group, an alkylsulfinyl group, an arylsulfinyl group, an alkylsulfonyl group, an arylsulfonyl group, an acyl group, an aryloxycarbonyl group, an alkoxycarbonyl group, a carbamoyl group, a phosphono group, a phosphonato group and a group that can form a covalent bond with a compound to be labeled (each of said group may be substituted), provided that V^1 , V^2 and V^3 do not simultaneously represent a hydrogen atom, and provided that V^1 and V^2 , V^2 and V^3 , V^6 and V^7 , and V^7 and V^8 may each independently form a saturated or unsaturated ring that may be substituted; R^1 and R^2 each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a group selected from the group consisting of an alkyl group, an aryl group and a heterocyclic group (each of said group may be substituted); R^3 , R^4 , R^5 and R^6 each independently represent an alkyl group that may be substituted, and R^3 and R^4 , and R^5 and R^6 may each independently bind to each other to form a ring that may be substituted; L^1 , L^2 and L^3 each independently represent a methine group that may be substituted; p represents 1, 2 or 3; M represents a counter ion; and q represents a number required to neutralize a charge of the molecule,

wherein at least one of V^1 , V^2 and V^3 is an aryl group substituted with a sulfo group or a salt thereof, a heterocyclic group substituted with a sulfo group or a salt thereof, or an alkynyl group substituted with a sulfo group or salt thereof.

Claims 17-28. (canceled).